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C H U R C H N E W S

FROM THE NORTHERN COUNTRIES

Edited by the Northern Ecumenical Institute

Sigtuna, Sweden

Director: Dr. Harry Johansson, Sigtuna, Sweden

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No. 7

June 29th, 1955.

Co-operation between Scandinavia's Christian Journalists.

An increasingly close contact and co-operation has of late developed between Christian journalists in the Northern countries. A meeting of representatives from the Christian daily papers in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden was recently held in Oslo to discuss their common problems, and shortly afterwards about 50 Christian pressmen from Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden gathered at Järvenpää, Finland, for a conference arranged by the Northern Ecumenical Institute. Among the subjects discussed were problems connected with the secular press as well as with the decidedly Christian press, the relations between Church and press, and the Church's - and hence also the Christian journalist's - attitude towards political questions. Leading journalists from various countries spoke, and the participants felt that the conference had been so profitable that they requested the Institute to arrange similar conferences in the near future.

DENMARK

German Proposal Regarding Church Problems Connected with the Danish Minority in South Schleswig.

There are some indications that it may be possible before long to reach a more stable settlement of the differences between the German Lutheran Church in Schleswig-Holstein and the Lutheran congregations belonging to the Danish minority. Ever since the end of the War the atmosphere has been rather tense in spite of repeated attempts to settle the differences, and it will cause much rejoicing on both sides of the border if it should now be possible to surmount the difficulties.

THE NORTHERN ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE

C H U R C H - S W E D E N

Stockholm, Sweden

FROM THE EDITOR: HENRI COHN

Edited by the Northern Ecumenical Institute

Stockholm, Sweden

Director: Dr. Harry Johansson, Stockholm, Sweden
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Co-operation between Scandinavia, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and the Baltic States

No. 7, published between 1955 and 1956

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DENMARK

German Proposal Regarding Church Problems Connected with the Danish Minority in South Schleswig

At a recent synod in Schleswig-Holstein Bishop Reinard Wester, Schleswig, proposed that services in the Danish language might be held in German parish churches, if the Danish Church did not have at its disposal a church or a room entirely dedicated to church work, provided not less than 15 members of a congregation belonging to the German National Church make a petition to this effect, though with the condition that the Danish clergyman be approved by the German parish council. In the same way church ceremonies may be performed by a Danish clergyman in the German parish churches if a member of the congregation sends a written petition to the German rector. If the group taking part in the church ceremony is linguistically divided, the use of Danish or German in the church is optional.

The background for this proposal, which was carried by 78 votes against 3, is the twofold that large sections of the Danish minority still speak German although they send their children to Danish schools, and that the great majority of them wish to remain within the German National Church instead of withdrawing to form their own independent congregations.

The German proposal will now be considered by the Danish Church Council in South Schleswig and then probably discussed by a Danish-German committee. At the synod Bishop Wester actually proposed the establishment of a permanent committee of this kind to deal with such difficulties as may arise, before the various church authorities decide on them. The Danish Church approves this arrangement.

Are We Approaching a Union of the Lutheran and Methodist Churches?

"The day will come - perhaps only in the next generation - when the Lutheran and Methodist Churches in Denmark will unite. Till then we must meet around the conference table." This is the end of a noteworthy article written by one of the Danish Methodist leaders Rev. Georg Særmærk, in "Økumeniske Nyheder" ("Ecumenical News"), the paper published by the Danish Ecumenical Council.

Pastor Særmærk reminds us that the Methodist Church is based on the Reformation as well as the Lutheran Church, and that the symbols of the Early Church are fundamental to the faith and doctrine of both Churches. Infant baptism is a strong bond between the two Churches although there is some differences in the conception of its significance, and there are likewise several features in the form of government which the two Churches have in common. Although the Methodist Church has preserved its individuality it has been influenced by the Lutheran National Church, just as the latter has received impulses from the Methodist Church. Thus the interchange of opinions has been to their mutual benefit.

The author describes the most important differences dividing the two Churches with regard to doctrine as well as in practice, and he believes that the way things are at present these differences will prevent any union. But he prophesies that the time for such a union is not far distant and he therefore suggests that the mutual relations of the two Churches should even now be taken up for discussion by their leaders.

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The German proposal will now be considered by the Danish Church Council in South Schleswig and then probably discussed by a Danish-German committee. At the synod Bishop Wester proposed the establishment of a permanent committee of this kind to deal with such difficulties as may arise. The Danish church authorities have decided on this.

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"When day will come - perhaps only in the next generation - when the Lutheran and Methodist Churches in Denmark will unite. Will then we must meet around the conference table." This is the end of a noteworthy article written by one of the Danish Methodist leaders Rev. Georg Jørgensen in "Kirkens Nyheder" ("Church News"), the paper published by the Danish Evangelical Council.

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Coming Lack of Clergymen in Denmark.

A statistical analysis instigated by the Association of Young Clergymen in Denmark shows that in the course of the next decade a lack of clergymen will probably make itself felt in Denmark similar to that now prevailing in Sweden. If there is no increase in the number of divinity students in the next few years the statistics show that there will be a deficiency in 1964 of some 50 clergymen. The statistics take into account the establishment of 150 new livings due to the increase in population - but it is very difficult to estimate this number correctly so that the estimated deficiency is only approximate.

Double as Many Women as Men in Danish Folk High Schools.

An analysis has shown that the number of women who enter the Danish Folk High Schools is now double the number of men. The reason is probably that the long military service and the steadily increasing demands for professional training make it difficult for young men between 18 and 25 to spend 6 months at the Folk High Schools.

The number of pupils in the Danish Folk High Schools, which are nearly all based on Christian principles and offer a general education, was in 1953 - 54 5848 as against 6193 the previous year and 5908 in 1951 - 52. The number of women students was 3912 in 1953 - 54, whereas there were 1936 men.

It has always been difficult for the Folk High Schools to gain a footing in the cities, and although there has been some increase in the enrolment of young people from the cities, they still only account for 1/6 of the total in spite of the fact about 1/2 of the population is urban.

U.N.'s Refugee High Commissioner on the Church's Effort to Help the Refugees.

The help from the voluntary organizations is indispensable if U.N.'s refugee work is to succeed, said U.N.'s Refugee High Commissioner van der Heuven Goedhardt in a broadcast talk over the Danish State Radio in connection with the annual collection for "The Danish National Church's Relief Work Abroad".

The High Commissioner went on to say that one of the most important results of the work of the Christian churches was the fact that faith and hope are being realized in practical programmes and projects.

"Perhaps I have no right to judge, but I believe that there is no other sphere in which Christians have done so much as in the work among the refugees. In my travels I have come into contact with the programmes of The World Council of Churches and of The Lutheran World Federation almost everywhere, and I have the greatest admiration for the men and women who face the struggles of each day with faith and courage", he said, and again later: "The voluntary organizations are not merely indispensable in solving the problems that U.N. has entrusted to me, but it would also have been impossible to realize the principles on which U.N.'s charter is founded, had it not been for the self-sacrificing work of these organizations and the co-operation between them and my office in making plans.

If Christians will continue to help and to carry the burden of the refugee problem and take up this constant challenge we shall some day be able to solve most of the problems still remaining."

FINLAND

Noteworthy Statement by the President at Finnish Church Jubilee.

The 800th anniversary of the Finnish Church was celebrated with great festivity in Turku (Åbo) Cathedral in the presence of a large number of guests invited from the other Northern countries, England, and the Lutheran World Federation.

The statements made by the Prime Minister Dr. Urho Kekkonen and by President J.K. Paasikivi in connection with the anniversary attracted a good deal of attention because of their very favourable attitude towards the Church's influence on the Finnish people in the past as well as in the present. The President said: "Finland's Church has solved cultural problems of many kinds. For many years it was the sole representative of an advanced spiritual development, and it has preserved the connection with Western culture; it has provided education for the people and guarded their moral standards; it considered poor relief one of its special duties; it has trained the nation in local self-government, and through its leaders it has taken part in national political decisions; it has even - at times when there were no secular authorities or when these were too remote - led the defence of the country."

After describing how many of the Church's duties have gradually been taken over by the secular authorities, the President concluded: "The Church has preserved and will continue to preserve its most important function: to devote itself to its central duty which is to give depth and breadth to the spiritual life of its members by proclaiming the eternal truths of Christianity. May the blessing of the Almighty be with the Church in this undertaking in our age of discord."

Two University Rectors on the Significance of Christianity.

As a part of the celebrations commemorating the 800th anniversary of the Finnish Church a number of theological doctor's degrees were awarded in Helsinki (Helsingfors) and Turku (Åbo). At these ceremonies the two University Rectors spoke, and both their speeches paid homage to the Church. The Rector of the University of Helsinki (Helsingfors), Professor Paavo Ravila said:

"When we to-day celebrate the anniversary of our Church in the traditional academic manner, we are at the same time showing our reverence for the traditions which have undeniably played an important part in the development of our people. However, these traditions are not only history; they still possess a living force which our nation cannot afford to do without. How would it be possible to maintain our free and democratic Northern society if we did not acknowledge the

fundamental idea of Christianity which accords full human dignity to each of our fellow-men, even the most helpless? And can a peaceful life with others be built on any firmer foundation than on Christian humility which teaches us to see our own deficiencies and our guilt? We have nothing that can replace the Christian commandment of love and its central values."

Rector Ravila concluded by expressing the hope that the ethical principles of Christianity might gain influence in public affairs for the good of the nation.

At the conferring of doctor's degrees in Turku (Åbo) the Rector of Turku (Åbo) Academy, Professor Lars-Erik Taxell said that the spread of Christianity in Finland had led to Finland's connection with Western culture. Though man's ancient hope of better men in a better world has not been fulfilled, Christianity has contributed an ideal basis for life and work in our country. Without its inspiration through the centuries our people would not to-day be living on their own soil.

Rector Taxell quoted the Swedish humanist Alf Ahlberg's words: "The West must become Christian or cease to exist"; though he himself did not wish to phrase it so sharply, he was convinced that though the individual is free to choose his own faith and view of life, society as a whole cannot do without the contribution of a vital and active Christianity.

New Diocese for the Finnish National Church.

Upon the recommendation of the Church leaders the Finnish Government decided to establish a new diocese in Syd-Österbotten (Southern Ostrobothnia). The announcement was made by the Prime Minister Dr. Urho Kekkonen, at the end of his speech in Turku (Åbo) in connection with the 800th anniversary of the Finnish Church. He characterized the establishment of the new diocese as a jubilee gift to the Church with the object of advancing its work for the people. The establishment of the new diocese will lighten the Archbishop's labours and help to intensify the Church's work.

Another desire of the Church is to have Helsinki (Helsingfors) and the surrounding district made into a separate diocese, but the Church cannot do this on its own, since according to the Church laws the State bears the diocesan expenses.

Great Sunday School Activity in Finland.

Ever since the times of the reformer Mikael Agricola the National Church has been most active in the instruction of children and adults. Hence the institution of Sunday Schools fell in good earth in Finland. As early as 1780 the peasants in the country parish of Orimattila opened a kind of Sunday School, and Archbishop J. Tengström's appeal to the clergy in 1907 that they should interest themselves in Sunday School work marked a new phase in Sunday School history. At present the work of the Finnish Sunday Schools is being carried out with great energy. Since 1919 no fewer than 1782 courses for the instruction of Sunday School teachers, so-called Luther courses, have been held and a total of 11,828 men and 54,749

women have taken part in these courses.

The number of children at present attending Sunday School runs into several hundred thousand, and of course this is of great importance for the Church. The Sunday School Association works in close contact with the Church's organizations and institutions, such as the Christian Folk High Schools and the Bible Institutes, and through its connection with Sunday School work in other countries, it has brought many new impulses to the Finnish Church.

NORWAY

Army Chaplains Attack Trashy Literature.

The Norwegian chaplains have taken the initiative in having pornographic and trashy magazines removed from army canteens. The entire corps of chaplains has sent an appeal to the canteens and at the same time brought the matter to the notice of the army authorities and the Bishop of Oslo.

The chaplain attached to the air-force in Northern Norway, Pastor Thorstein Bryne, first raised the question, and at his initiative the canteens in his district have already removed the trashy literature. The chaplains are now demanding that this should also be done at the other garrisons. The canteens are run as independent institutions, but in their appeal the chaplains have pointed out that the rules laid down for the running of the canteens presuppose that nothing should occur infringing upon Christian moral principles.

The action has been criticized in some quarters. In the soldiers' own paper it has been said that the chaplains should not act as censors of the men's reading material. The chaplains reply that the soldiers have free access to any literature they may want outside the barracks, but in the camps the rules laid down by the army must necessarily be maintained.

10,000 Participants in Sunday School Day in Oslo.

Recently a Sunday School Day was celebrated all over Norway. All the Sunday School children attended special services in the churches or marched in procession to open-air meetings. In Oslo open-air meetings were held in 12 of the city parks, and in spite of bad weather more than 10,000 children and adults gathered.

Civil Confirmation Ceremony in Oslo Town Hall.

For the third time a so-called civil confirmation ceremony was recently held in Oslo's town hall. 83 young people who had attended a course in "humanist ethics and sociology" took part in the celebrations. In his speech one of the leading Norwegian humanists, the barrister Th. Wyller, pointed to Einstein and Albert Schweitzer as ideals for the young people to follow. Commenting on the speech "Vårt Land", the Christian daily, writes that Albert Schweitzer would certainly protest against being made use of in support of a confirmation of this kind, and that he would have pointed to Jesus Christ as the ideal for young people.

On the same day 2200 young people were confirmed in Oslo's churches.

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Seven Oslo Congregations Prepare United Evangelization Campaign.

One week in September several hundred laymen from seven Oslo congregations are to go from door to door in their districts inviting people to evangelization meetings in the churches and attempting to engage them in personal conversation about Christianity. Representatives of the congregations recently met to plan the campaign. Oslo's Bishop Dr. Johannes Smemo presided at this meeting. Among the guests were Pastor Conrad Thomson, the leader of the evangelization work in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in USA, and Pastor Carl Mau, a pastor of the American Lutheran Church, who has now been serving for some years with the Lutheran World Federation in Germany.

Pastor Thomson shared his experience gained from the "teaching-reaching- preaching mission" being attempted by several Lutheran churches in America at present. It is this campaign that has inspired the Norwegian congregations. Pastor Mau spoke of the attempt to transplant the idea of stewardship from American to European soil.

Pastor Thomson and Pastor Mau have also visited a number of towns along the Norwegian coast where they have spoken to clergymen and interested laymen.

Extra Trains and Buses to Billy Graham-Meeting.

Billy Graham is to speak in Oslo on July 3rd and extra trains will probably be put on to bring listeners from Bergen and Trondheim, both about 11 hours' train journey from Oslo. From nearer towns there will be extra buses to the extent that tickets to the meeting are available. Ullevål Stadium where the meeting is to be held seats about 35,000 people, but it is expected that thousands will not be able to get in, and loud-speakers are being installed for their benefit. The assistants who are to give spiritual guidance to those who accept Christ have already been gathered at several preparatory meetings in which members of Billy Graham's team also took part.

Cheaper Church Weddings.

In Oslo last year there were more civil marriages than church weddings, whereas in the rest of the country it is only a small minority who prefer the civil ceremony. Several of the church papers have pointed out that one of the reasons for this state of affairs in Oslo may be the fact that it is far more expensive to be married by a clergyman than to go to the registrar at the town hall. In many places, but especially in Oslo, a number of special charges are made for church weddings, thus for heating, for the services of the organist, for flowers on the altar, for a carpet on the floor, attendants at the door, etc. These fees are collected by the municipal authorities.

After the pointed attacks in the Christian press the municipality of Oslo has decided to let the charges fall for "closed" weddings, i.e. those to which only the wedding guests are given admittance to the church.

THE STATE OF NEW YORK

IN SENATE,
January 10, 1910.

REPORT OF THE
COMMISSIONER OF THE LAND OFFICE
IN RESPONSE TO A RESOLUTION PASSED BY THE SENATE
JANUARY 10, 1909.

ALBANY:
J.B. LIPPINCOTT & CO. PRINTERS.
1910.

SWEDEN

Diocese of Stockholm Establishes a Pedagogical Institute.

The diocesan council of Stockholm has recently taken the initiative for the establishment of a pedagogical institute with the purpose of helping the church to get into touch with the many people in the metropolis who live without any personal connection with the church, though formally they belong to it.

Relations between church and people are different from what they used to be, says Pastor Ottar Ottersen, who has been appointed principal of the Institute. Characteristic of the new situation is the fact that a great number of people who belong to the Church stand outside the active fellowship of the congregation and are thus beyond the reach of the appeal and the educational influence of the Church's proclamation of the Gospel. For this reason the Church must purposefully take up an evangelization directed towards the nation and society as a whole.

The Church must not confine itself to an interest in theology it must also be concerned with religious education, Pastor Ottersen continues. The Church has just as great an obligation to provide itself with trained religious educationalists as with trained theologians.

One of the means by which the diocese plans to discharge this duty is the establishment of this Institute. Its work will fall into two main categories, one a theoretical branch with pedagogical seminars for clergymen and teachers and with grants for research by clergymen in the fields of pedagogy and psychology, while the other is to be a practical, instructive branch. These branches will again be divided into three sections, one for home and family, one for school and educational problems, and one for Sunday School and junior activities.

No Plebiscite on Separation of Church and State.

The Swedish Parliament has rejected a proposal made by Liberals supported by the Free Churches for a plebiscite in 1957 to decide for or against a separation of the State and the Lutheran National Church.

The men who proposed this bill suggested that the principle of religious liberty ought to lead away from such an institution as the State Church, and that the dissolution of the bond between the State and the National Church would lead to a religious renaissance and an increase of church activity.

The opponents of the bill asserted that such a separation might easily lead to cultural discord and prohibit such an important factor as religious education in the schools. Besides, such a plebiscite would demand a detailed statement of what should take the place of the present arrangement.

The bill was dropped after a short discussion without coming to a vote.

Church Denominations Must Co-operate as Missionary Enterprises.

The ecumenical discussion in Sweden is still centred around the ideas put forward some time ago by Professor Gustaf Wingren, Lund, in the weekly paper "Vår Kyrka". He advocated a union between the Lutheran National Church and the non-Baptist denominations on a local basis, believing that such a development is natural when the churches have learned to acknowledge each other as Christian bodies.

The High Churchman Dr. Gunnar Rosendal, Osby, is one of those who have opposed Professor Wingren's views feeling that they are more Congregationalist than Lutheran. Luther laid great stress upon the unity of the entire Christian church and this genuinely catholic point of view must be the point of departure for all ecumenical endeavours. The Church is the body of Christ and its disunity means that the body is dismembered. Hence the disunity is sin, and it is our duty to heal the wounds. Congregationalist views may lead to a pragmatic agreement, suitable and useful in certain cases and at certain times, but not to the true unity of the Church.

Professor Wingren replies that his point of view cannot justly be called Congregationalist, but is genuinely Lutheran. Congregationalism maintains that the Bible gives us directions regarding the correct form of church government, whereas the Lutheran symbolic books consider this a question of order which should be settled according to local conditions.

Professor Wingren has further expounded his views in a new article. In the light of the present situation in Sweden he characterizes all denominations as missionary enterprises, and he maintains that if only they are willing to recognize each other as Christians, they would be perfectly capable of co-operation and might divide the country among themselves either on a geographical basis or according to population groups; of this the New Testament as well as the history of modern missions supply sufficient proof.

Professor Wingren claims in opposition to the High Church assertion of the importance of tradition that the age of the various denominations does not make them more apostolic or less so; the continuity of their apostolicity lies in their direct relation to Scripture to-day. For Scripture is the medium through which Christ and His Apostles speak to us and perform their work in us.

Rajah Manikam Bishop in the Tamil Church.

The former secretary for East Asia under the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council, Dr. Rajah Manikam, has now officially accepted the call to the office of bishop (from January 1st, 1956) for the Lutheran Tamil Church in South India, which numbers some 50,000 Christians on the mission fields of the Swedish Church and the Leipzig Mission. Dr. Manikam gave his final decision recently while attending the meeting held by the Swedish Board of Foreign Missions at Uppsala. The office of bishop in the Tamil Church has been held by three Swedes since the Church was given a

constitution in 1921, namely Ernst Heumann, David Bexell, and the present bishop Johannes Sandegren.

The appointment of Bishop Manikam will undoubtedly have a good deal of significance for the continued negotiations between the Lutheran Church and the Church of South India, as the Bishop is a known supporter of a union between these two churches.

Interdenominational Evangelization in Sweden.

Looking back at the past winter one has the decided impression that it has been more fruitful spiritually than any we have had for a long time, says a leading article in the paper "Svensk Veckotidning" published by Svenska Missionsförbundet (The Mission Covenant Church of Sweden). The paper finds that there has been a revival in the congregations and a spiritual renewal. One feature that is more prominent than before is the interdenominational evangelization work being carried on in several places. The paper expresses its joy at this and welcomes the initiative, although it is fully aware of the inherent danger of ensuing friction between the denominations.

New Flashes.

The new Bishop in the diocese of Strängnäs, Dr. Gösta Lundström, formerly Dean of the diocese, has been ordained in his new office by Archbishop Yngve Brilioth.

Rev. Sven Danell, a Court Chaplain, won a clear majority of the votes at the election of the new bishop for the diocese of Skara.

Radical changes in the divinity course at the Universities will come into effect on July 1st this year. The changes will greatly reduce the period of study, so that it will now be possible to complete training in 3 1/2 years (7 terms).

The Committee for Co-operation between the Free Churches has pronounced in favour of complete abstinence from alcohol on account of the importance to alcoholics of a total absence of alcohol in their environment.

The Evangelical Alliance in Sweden has invited Billy Graham for a three weeks' campaign in 1956 or 57. This summer he is coming for a one day visit to Sweden, Norway, and Denmark respectively.

The following statement was made by the Evangelical Alliance in Sweden: "If Graham can arouse the church and people to the work of evangelization we must be willing to let him do it. We are willing to let ourselves be instructed by the best minds we may not reach it." The present Bishop of the diocese of Uppsala, Dr. J. J. Sjöö, has expressed his satisfaction and approval of Billy Graham's visit and his inspiring work.

In the past few years there has been a lively debate on Graham's doctrine and methods before his arrival. In contrast of the earlier years when the Church issued a formal statement expressing their disapproval, now because they wished to deny his being a Quaker, but because they felt there is a

